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East German woman, historian's grandson face espionage charges

By Michael J. Sniffen
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WASHINGTON — The FBI yesterday charged an East German woman with spying for the Soviet Union and the grandson of a Pulitzer Prize-winning American historian with selling U.S. satellite photographs of a Soviet warship to a London military journal.

The two were arrested Monday night at airports here and in New York. The cases are unrelated.

In the case of the woman, Alice Michelson, an FBI affidavit described a classic spy operation complete with a Soviet "safe house" in New York City, a rendezvous at the Soviet Embassy in Mexico and instructions to hide recording tape in modified cigarette packs.

In the case of Samuel Loring Morison, grandson of Samuel Eliot Morison, agents said he became bored in a top-secret government position and longed to trade his inside information for a new job.

Michelson, 67, was charged with knowingly receiving classified information on behalf of the Soviet Union. If convicted, she could receive life in prison.

Morison, 40, of Crofton, Md., was charged with selling secret U.S. satellite photos of a Soviet aircraft carrier under construction at a Black Sea naval shipyard to Jane's Defense Weekly in London. He was arrested at Dulles International Airport here.

While the U.S. government has on rare occasions, such as the Cuban missile crisis, made public its satellite photos, the released pictures are carefully selected and the remainder closely guarded in order to conceal how powerful U.S. overhead cameras really are.

Morison's case marked the first time the government has used the espionage statute to charge an individual who was selling or giving secrets to a corporation.

His grandfather won Pulitzer Prizes for biographies of Columbus and John Paul Jones. The elder Morison, who died in 1976, taught history

at Harvard University from 1915 to 1955 and is widely known for a 15-volume history of the U.S. Navy in World War II and for *The Oxford History of the American People*.

A court affidavit by FBI and naval intelligence agents described Morison as dissatisfied with his job as a Soviet amphibious ship analyst at the Naval Intelligence Support Center, which he called "a pit." Letters extracted by the FBI from his typewriter ribbon showed him soliciting a full-time job with Jane's, the publisher of authoritative books on military armaments. He was a part-time U.S. editor for Jane's Fighting Ships.

The FBI recovered the photos from Jane's and said it found Morison's fingerprint on one.

Michelson was arrested at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York as she was preparing to leave the country with the classified information, the FBI said.

The FBI affidavit in Brooklyn, N.Y., said that on Saturday, Michelson picked up a cigarette pack containing information about confidential government cables from an Army sergeant who was pretending to work for Soviet intelligence agents.

In May, the sergeant had flew to Mexico City and met a man named Konstantinov at the Soviet Embassy. On Sept. 15, the sergeant returned to the embassy, the affidavit said, and was told to dictate the contents of confidential cables onto the tapes, then "take out the spools, wrap them up and conceal them" in eight modified cigarette packs.

On Sept. 20, according to the affidavit, the sergeant telephoned Michelson, who was staying at a New York apartment identified in the FBI papers as a Soviet "safe house" packed with spy paraphernalia and records of Soviet intelligence operations in this country.

Four days later, Michelson arranged to meet the sergeant at the Baltimore-Washington International Airport, after which she returned to New York, the FBI said.